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EXCISE

FROM : American Embassy, HELSINKI

619

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

March 29, 1960

DATE

REF :

SLEWC-1

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SUBJECT: Foreign Policy Debate Arouses Domestic Political Controversy and Soviet Comment.

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Much of the editorial energy of the Finnish press was expended in the middle of March on a controversy over foreign policy touched off by speeches made by Olavi Lindblom, Vice-Chairman of the Social Democratic Party and possible successor to the Party Chairmanship, and by Paavo Raviola, Finnish Academy member and Finno-Ugric language scholar who is occasionally mentioned as a Presidential possibility. Special stimulus was given the debate by Soviet criticism of the speakers and praise for the line taken by the principal organ of the government party, Agrarian Maakansa.

On March 6, Lindblom, in a brief reference to Finnish foreign policy at a Social Democratic enclave, clearly implied that President Kekkonen has strayed from the "Paasikivi line" to the extent of surrendering Finland's "right of self-determination" (Encl. 1). On March 10, Maakansa replied firmly that Finland's self-determination remains unchanged. Assuming Lindblom had in mind mainly the downfall of the Fagerholm Government under Soviet pressure in late 1958, Maakansa repeated the view it has consistently held since that crisis: "We can form any kind of Government and no one will prevent us. But it is quite another matter whether just any Government would have the prerequisites to manage affairs successfully" (Encl. 2).

This exchange seemed to be passing practically unnoticed until Izvestiya, on March 13, endorsed Maakansa's remarks and, in the first Soviet attack on a Social Democratic leader in almost a year, labeled Lindblom "an enemy of good neighbor relations between the USSR and Finland" (Encl. 3).

Simultaneously came Raviola's speech to the Norden Society in Oslo. He stated that the "surprisingly friendly" relations between the Soviet Union and Finland are due principally to a Soviet calculation that good relations with Finland are needed to avoid adverse reaction among the other northern countries (Encl. 4). Once again Maakansa replied, calling Raviola's comments "unfortunate and unwise" and the Soviet press followed up, this time through Komsomolskaya Pravda. The Soviet youth paper had additional praise for Maakansa and accused Raviola of attempting "to pervert the character of sincere neighborly harmony of Fenno-Soviet relations" (Encl. 5). Confusion was added by the fact that Raviola's speech was apparently incompletely and inaccurately reported initially.

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While Ravila was speaking in Oslo, Social Democratic Speaker of Parliament Fagerholm addressed a group in Copenhagen to the effect that, while Fenno-Soviet relations have been good in general, the USSR has been particularly suspicious of some Social Democratic leaders, a suspicion which has been "supported by certain quarters in Finland [i.e., the Agrarians] for domestic political purposes". He added that "the Social Democrats are not giving up their right to choose their own Chairman and to arrange domestic matters in accordance with their own views". Curiously these comments by the man who led the government brought down under Soviet pressure in 1958 evoked hardly a ripple in Finland aside from the responses of Maakansa which once more felt obliged to answer. Maakansa wrote that "it does not make a good impression to claim that distrust on the part of the Soviet Union towards certain Social Democratic Party leaders has been fed from Finland for domestic political reasons. It is not proper either to declare that anyone is trying to prevent the Social Democratic Party from choosing its own leaders and deciding on its other affairs."

On the remarks of Lindblom and Ravila, echoes of Maakansa, Izvestiya, and Komsomolskaya Pravda appeared in Communist Kansan Uutiset and Skogist Päivän Sanomat, the latter making a particularly vicious attack on Ravila who was characterized as a "lunatic" and an insignificant academician who should "avoid matters of which he has neither knowledge nor understanding". Kansan Uutiset declared that the two speeches and the defense they received from the bourgeois press were part of the preparations by rightists for the Presidential elections.

Suomen Sosialidemokraatti came to the defense of its Party's Vice Chairman and Ravila, accusing Maakansa of "disgraceful tactics" in misrepresenting both speeches and thus misleading the Finnish public and the Soviet press. The Socialist paper declared that the Communist-Agrarian-Skogist "phalanx" believes that only it understands and is able to manage Finland's external affairs.

In defense of his own speech, Lindblom stressed he had said "nothing contrary to the good relations and peaceful coexistence adopted by our country. Nobody can deny that the 'Paasikivi-Kekkonen line' has been the policy of a specific group, while Paasikivi always emphasized that his foreign policy was the foreign policy of the entire nation. Those who attacked me failed to mention that part of my speech in which I stated that the Social Democratic Party unanimously approves the Paasikivi line". Outspoken Social Democrat Väinö Leskinen noted that "the similarities between the writings of Maakansa and Izvestiya indicate that these papers are trying to harmonize their ideological pursuits in accordance with the well-known popular front formula."

Conservative Uusi Suomi and independent Helsingin Sanomat took pains to underscore the satisfaction expressed by the Soviet press with Maakansa's stand. They related the Agrarian paper's attack on Lindblom and Ravila to Agrarian opposition to the two men as prospective candidates for the Social Democratic Chairmanship and the Presidency of Finland respectively. Swedish papers

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reacted to the argument over Ravila's speech in moderating tones and offered advice on how matters of this kind should be handled. Huvudstadsbladet, after noting it was difficult to find any attacks on the USSR in Ravila's remarks, called on the Finns to disperse the atmosphere in Finland of "suspicion, accusation, and uncertainty" which Ravila said had replaced previous national unanimity. Västra Nyland found Ravila's thoughts vague and susceptible to differing interpretations. It advised caution in making statements on foreign policy in order to avoid "unnecessary misunderstanding".

Maakansa was kept busy for two or three days defending its uncomfortable position as recipient of Soviet praise. The paper said that, as the principal spokesman for the party in power, it was duty bound to reply; to have failed to do so would have been admitting the "accusations" made.

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For the Ambassador:

Harvey F. Nelson, Jr.
Harvey F. Nelson, Jr.
Second Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures: *at*
Excerpts from editorial comment. (5)

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From Helsinki

Olavi Lindblom's March 6 Foreign Policy Remarks*

(Excerpts from a speech to a Social Democratic meeting in Oulu)

The "Paasikivi Line" has lately been converted into the "Paasikivi-Kekkonen Line". When these are compared, one cannot help but be perturbed. The Paasikivi Line was the establishment of friendly relations with the Soviet Union and other foreign countries. At the same time it was the unconditional adherence to treaties and to the right of self-determination. The situation is quite different with the Paasikivi-Kekkonen Line, since according to it, not everything Paasikivi unreservedly stood for is adhered to.

Foreign policy is the policy of the Finnish people, not of a special group. That was the Paasikivi Line. But now affairs have been managed in the opposite way which had led to "nightly frosts" among other things. In all logic, if Finland is considered an independent nation, it must be allowed to maintain its right of self-determination. Finland has achieved recognition for unreserved adherence to ... treaties. It remains true today that treaties must be observed. But as regards our own affairs, we must have the right of self-determination.

*Unofficial Embassy translation.

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From Helsinki

March 10 MAAKANSA Comments on Lindblom's March 6 Foreign Policy Remarks*

This is heedless and falacious talk. No change has taken place in our official foreign policy. If certain Social Democratic leaders have also mixed into their mutual disputes their ideas on foreign policy to such an extent that it has caused difficulties for the country, it by no means signifies that our foreign policy has changed. Also the claim that our right of self-determination is not the same as before is groundless. We can establish any kind of Government and no one will prevent us. But it is quite another matter whether just any Government would have the prerequisites to manage affairs successfully. The Social Democratic Party leaders, at least judging from their conduct, do not promote these possibilities to function successfully. A fresh demonstration of this is Director General Lindblom's attack on our official foreign policy. It is deplorable that the Social Democrats continue to muddy the waters like this. It shows that they really do not care to create the necessary conditions for Government collaboration. It seems that their conduct and intentions are directed by other interests.

*Unofficial Embassy translation.

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Text of March 13 IZVESTIYA Attack on Lindblom*

(As given to the Finnish press by the Soviet Information Bureau, Helsinki)

BEHIND THE TIMES

On March 6, at a meeting of the Social Democratic organization in Oulu, there appeared one of the Party's right-wing leaders, Olavi Lindblom, whom some people predict will be Tanner's successor as Chairman of the Social Democratic Party.

According to what has been reported by the Finnish newspapers, Lindblom once more revealed himself to be an enemy of good neighbor relations between the USSR and Finland and sharply attacked Finland's present foreign-political orientation -- the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line -- the cornerstone of which is maintenance of friendship and appropriate cooperation with the Soviet Union. Ignoring the real facts, he tried by every method to blacken all those who, with the national interests of Finland as their starting point, logically appear in favor of friendship between Finland and the Soviet people. At the same time he attempted to whitewash those who were responsible for the cooling of relations between the USSR and Finland that occurred in the latter half of 1958, a time which with a good reason is called the period of autumn frosts in Finland.

Lindblom is really trying to place guilt on the shoulders of the guiltless.

But he will not succeed in it. MAAKANSA, which is the organ of the Government party - the Agrarian Party - gives him the right answer. The paper wrote: "Lindblom made a flagrant attack against our official foreign-political orientation ... It is very deplorable that the Social Democrats still continue to muddy the waters."

To these most opportune words we can only add that those who today select such a road are behind the times.

*Unofficial Embassy translation.

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Excerpt from Paavo Ravila's March 14 Oslo Speech on Finland's Position

(The final third of Ravila's speech, as published by UUSI SUOMI on March 22, appears below. The preceding portion of the speech dealt with Finland's history "as an outpost between East and West".)

Since the conclusion of World War II, a new situation has again arisen between Finland and its mighty neighbor. It is in many respects unusual and its character cannot be accurately defined. The key to the situation is naturally in the hands of the Soviet leaders and there is no reason to believe that anybody could provide other than loose surmises of their intentions. Furthermore, it is quite clear that their plans and objectives change in accordance with the requirements of world politics and the general situation. History seems distinctly to show that, at least regarding Finland, Russian policy has been guided by quite concrete and practiced political aspirations. Although the absolutist way of thinking and Great Russian imperialism were distinctly apparent for example in the Russianization policy of the Oppression Years, the background then was also a world political one. The international situation forced the Russians to take up protective measures at their north-western border, in order to protect especially their great city, the city of fate for Finland. The case was the same in 1939.

The Winter War was probably not an expression of Communist expansion. It was a protective measure, by which Finland was to be brought into such a position that it could by no means be used as a bridge-head against Russia, but rather the opposite, as a bridge-head against the West. Paasikivi had said that the Soviet Union's interest in Finland was primarily of military-strategic quality. It is obvious, too, that there is hardly any other direct interest, for our country's natural resources are not tempting nor does the Soviet Union need our harbors. In a way this is indicated by the fact that the Soviet Union gave up the leased Porkkala area, which naturally had been taken primarily for military reasons. The technological development of warfare made Porkkala useless and thus its relinquishment could be skillfully made use of to achieve certain propagandistic objectives. But what then do these military-strategic interests mean? It is a matter so indefinite in limits that anything can be made to fit the picture. Who can say where the border lies between military-strategic interests on one hand and economic and political interests on the other?

The fact that the Soviet Union's attitude on Finland has been highly favorable has aroused especial interest outside the borders of our country. It can be said that the relations have been surprisingly friendly with the exception of some famous night frosts. Attempts have been made to explain this matter in many ways. Certain quarters in Finland say that all is the achievement of skillful Finnish statesmen, whereas earlier, some simpletons led Finland to the paths of war. On the other hand, people willingly say that Finland's heroic struggle for its independence has aroused respect in the Russians. There may be something true in all this talk and it is not good to break people's illusions, but it is quite certain that this matter too has to be viewed against a wider background. There

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can be no doubt that the Soviet Union has had all of Scandinavia in mind. An occupation of Finland and its conversion into a people's democracy, which would require a high degree of forceful measures, would affect Scandinavia in a way which could not be regarded by the Soviet Union as advantageous. The warm and profound interest which the Scandinavian brother nations have shown toward Finland has meant immeasurably much to our entire national life.

Unavoidably the Soviet Union remains a riddle to us. Our own stand has become much simpler, even though perhaps more difficult, than before. We aspire to build up a neutrality that in everything seeks to maintain good relations based on mutual confidence. We try to avoid anything that might arouse unfounded suspicions in our neighbor, while we simultaneously maintain our independence. This neutrality of ours is often discernible at the United Nations where we are forced to abstain from voting on difficult issues of conflict. Everyone who knows Finnish conditions and sensitivities knows how poignant the cause of Hungary has been to us, but we have tried to refrain from irritating our neighbor. Similarly, the deep sorrow caused by the fate of the Baltic countries and especially of our closest kindred people, the Estonians, has been concealed under a cloak of silence.

Is Finland's neutrality that which the word ordinarily denotes? Some time ago, a well known Swedish diplomat, Ambassador Gunnar Hägglöf — in discussing Sweden's policies during World War II — said that in order to be successful, the neutrality of a country must lean on three factors. First, the country has to have an effective defense system. Secondly, there must be a certain equilibrium of power outside the country. And, thirdly, all the most important political groups must be unanimous in their support of the policy of neutrality. Where Finland is concerned, none of these prerequisites unfortunately holds to the full. The peace treaty sets considerable restrictions on the national defense system. But even if this was not the case, we have not nearly the same possibilities as for example Sweden in the present era of technological development. I want to assert, however, that the defense system of Finland is not an entirely insignificant factor even today. At the moment of danger, we have been accustomed to making up for the material shortages with spiritual contributions. As to the equilibrium of international power, I think I can contend — even though the — vacillations and changes in this respect will undoubtedly affect our country's position — that the Finns no longer are desirous of building up their relations to the East as equilibrists. The general opinion is that relations must be such as to make friendly exchanges possible and that the Soviet Union must be fully convinced that Finland really sticks to the 1948 agreement which obliges Finland to see to it that its territory is in no manner used for anti-Soviet activity.

As to the internal front, it must be stated with regret that only some scraps are left of the unanimity which prevailed during the Winter War. After Paasikivi passed away, we had nobody who could come at all close to his prestige in holding the various elements united. There are quarrels with regard to the so-called Paasikivi Line which is recognized by everyone as their own but the content of which is interpreted by everyone in a manner they find best suited to their purposes. The worst obstacle in the way of national unanimity where

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important matters are concerned is the Communists. It is difficult to say what factors have caused the fact that we have so many Communists and that their number seems to grow. The reply is not as simple as the question. However, it is of course evident that the might and power of the Soviet Union are important factors. One quarter of the Parliament is Communist. Their influence on the affairs of the country is very considerable. True enough, they have not been admitted to the Cabinet for a long time, but their visible and invisible support has been made use of unhesitatingly. All this has served to create an atmosphere of suspicion, accusations and uncertainty in our situation [which] is also difficult in many other respects.

It is quite clear that the great majority of our nation, which at the same time contains the elite of the people in all social classes, will not consent voluntarily to give up our country's independence regardless of the sacrifices it would require. True enough, it has been said that it does not pay to be as small as Finland is. To the majority of our people, however, it is an indispensable value to be part of independent Finland, to maintain a free democratic social order and to breathe the fresh air of the North".

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Komsomolskaya Pravda's March 18 Article

on
P. Ravila's Speech*

A Strange Voice

News has come from Norway: Finnish Academician Paavo Ravila has spoken to students in Oslo on the theme "Finland between the East and the West". We could have ignored a lecture like this (by no means does it mean anything more to world science) had it not spoken about the policy of the Soviet Union towards Finland.

P. Ravila attempted in his speech to pervert the character of sincere neighborly harmony of Fenno-Soviet relations. He claimed that the Soviet policy of friendship and collaboration towards Finland is due to only temporary reasons, certain special tactics. The eager Academician sees some conspiracy and propaganda measure even in the fact that the Soviet Union gave up the Porkkala naval base before the fixed date determined by the contract. In his speech Ravila went far enough to claim that the Soviet Union supposedly would have occupied Finland a long time ago, but it dares not do so fearing the negative reaction of Scandinavia. One cannot go to a greater extreme the saying goes.

The Finnish elements who support the maintenance and development of the good neighborly relations between our countries have condemned P. Ravila's hostile speeches with disapproval.

In our opinion, Academician Ravila's speech does not deserve a better grade than 2, even as a tactical appearance, notes Maakansa, the paper representing the Agrarian Party, the Finnish Government Party.

Nevertheless a question arises for as to why this reactionary Finnish man has attacked the peaceful foreign policy of the Soviet Union and Fenno-Soviet collaboration, particularly in the capital of Norway.

We know that the aggressive circles of the NATO have recently directed strong pressure against the Scandinavian member countries of the NATO. They are attempting to compel Denmark and Norway to join the armament race more actively than before. These circles and their aides, using the bankrupt of the cold war, attempt to frighten the Danes and the Norwegians by endless "threats of the East".

P. Ravila by no means appeared independently. His lecture which was intended as a scientific line of argument of the cold war, serves the old goals - i.e. to prevent the easing of the international tension. Obviously the Finnish Academician has decided to make his own contribution to this thankless task. But today scarcely anybody can take seriously these groundless comments either in Norway or elsewhere in Scandinavia.

*Unofficial Embassy translation.

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